

With \$100,000 in contributions from the Kalamazoo community, and nearly 10,000 meals delivered to the frontline during the pandemic, Feed the Fight Kalamazoo is poised to make its final deliveries and bid a sweet farewell!

9941 meals delivered in Kalamazoo since COVID-19 first hit our community

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KALAMAZOO, MI (June 21, 2021) – On Friday, Michigan announced 162 new Covid cases, mirroring the low case rates experienced last June. Vaccinations are on the rise and pandemic restrictions are to lift on Tuesday. Feed the Fight Kalamazoo was founded to provide an avenue for community members to ‘do something’ to support our frontline healthcare workers during the pandemic - giving money, volunteering their time to deliver meals, sharing our messages, creating our posters, scheduling restaurants to order meals from, and so much more. The time has come to say thank you and farewell! We would also like to thank Colleagues International (soon to be known as Global Ties Kalamazoo), our fiscal sponsor, for supporting this project from its creation in April 2020 throughout the past year.

Since January 22, when we delivered meals to a Family Health Center (FHC) vaccination clinic at Stones Church, we have been feeding the vaccinators - through FHC, Bronson, Kalamazoo County, and community clinics of all shapes and sizes - providing a boost to those inoculating our community against the ravages of the pandemic. We are in a privileged place here in the United States, with access to vaccines and a way to jab ourselves ahead of the variants and keep case numbers on the decline. While in much of the world pandemic restrictions remain firmly in place and the Covid-19 pandemic is far from over, knowing that another wave could still befall us here, it is still time to say thank you and goodbye. **This week, on Wednesday and Thursday, we will be making some of our final deliveries to the Family Health Center and Bronson (with deliveries to Kalamazoo County volunteers to come later) fittingly, of desserts, to bid a sweet farewell and deep-hearted thanks to those in our community working above and beyond to move us past the dangers of this pandemic.**

We could not have helped restaurants stay afloat, with some directly attributing orders from us to helping them over the finish line to make end of month payments, and others to knowing that they too were ‘doing something’ to support those on the frontlines.

The appreciation felt by our healthcare heroes who ate these meals is the reason we did this in the first place. Knowing that we made their dangerous work even a little bit easier makes all of our work worthwhile.

Here’s what a couple of the meal recipients had to say:

"It was such a wonderful large blessing -- plenty of delicious food," said Molli K, one of the meal recipients at the group home at which she works. "(Skinny Kenny BBQ) was so proud to be able to help us. I think this is a great program."

"We are so excited," said Tara at Residential Opportunities Incorporated, as she prepared to pick up the first Feed the Fight Kalamazoo meal delivery for the folks at ROI's numerous facilities throughout the county this summer. "We have many group homes where they've been working so hard during all of this doing extra sanitation and working long hours. They are so excited to feel appreciated by a lunch or a meal -- it really means a lot."

Often throughout the pandemic, frontline workers wouldn't have access to refrigeration or options to heat up meals. This was the case both at the beginning of the pandemic when folks staffing drive-through testing clinics were working out in the field and in the winter and spring of 2021 when folks at vaccine clinics -- including pharmacists, health care workers, volunteers, medical and nursing students from area colleges, and members of the national guard -- often worked long hours in locations that didn't offer the means to store and heat meals. So many of these healthcare heroes expressed immense gratitude for the nourishing and morale boosting meals.

We are so proud of the many ways our community has stepped up to support one another during this crisis, from mutual aid groups to emergency funds for our community. Let us all remain vigilant, get vaccinated and build a safer future for all, so that the next pandemic, when it rears its head, can't get a toehold.

Here are our final Feed the Fight Kalamazoo numbers through the end of this week:

- **9941 meals** delivered
- **271 distinct deliveries** from individual restaurants
- **107 local restaurants** that we have purchased meals from
- **1 healthcare hero award** from the Family Health Center
- **Over 350 individual donations**
- **Dozens of volunteers**
- **More than a thousand healthcare workers fed and supported in our community, with thousands of meals delivered**

We have **6 deliveries coming up this week, starting on Wednesday and Thursday**, and would welcome coverage of our volunteers and restaurant partners providing these final deliveries to frontline vaccinators. You can see what we have been up to [on our social media feed](#).

Contact Jodi Michaels for delivery details (Wednesday and Thursday).

In the words of one of Feed the Fight Kalamazoo's co-founders, Adam Strong-Morse, at the FHC Healthcare Heroes Award Ceremony in October:

“Most of all, we want to thank the people who have been providing the healthcare work in the community, the frontline responders, in the difficult, scary work of dealing with this pandemic and we wanted to reach out to help them and the community really responded and came together. We had a huge outpouring of support and we were able to provide our support to the people who were really on the frontlines of the fight against Covid. And that is what makes us happiest about this - that we were able to make a difference in the community, we were able to allow the people in the community who wanted a way to help, to find a way that they could help the restaurants, they could help the community, and most of all they could help the healthcare workers and frontline people in the fight against Covid.”

About FTFK:

Feed the Fight Kalamazoo is a **100% volunteer initiative to help frontline healthcare workers meet the COVID-19 crisis head on** - knowing that the Kalamazoo community has their back. With more than \$100,000 dollars raised, from more than 350 individual donors, FTFK's 70+ volunteers have delivered almost 10,000 meals from 107 distinct local restaurants (at \$10 per meal) since the pandemic began.

To learn more please visit ffkalamazoo.org or follow the effort on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram (#FTFKalamazoo @FTFKalamazoo)